



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
— OFFICE OF GOVERNOR JAY INSLEE —

October 22, 2021

Governor Jack Markell  
Operation Allies Welcome Coordinator  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Governor Markell:

I write to applaud the steps taken by the Biden administration in response to the evacuation of noncombatants from Afghanistan, and to recommend additional measures needed to ensure strong support for those fleeing violence and persecution. I know that having served as both a governor and past chair of the National Governors' Association, you have a deep appreciation of the essential role state and local governments play in complex operations such as Operation Allies Welcome. As I [wrote to President Biden](#) in August, Washington is ready to do its part to support new arrivals from Afghanistan to our community.

At the federal level, the swift passage and signature of House Resolution 5305, providing continuing appropriations through December 3, 2021, was a vital first step in addressing needs that will only grow as additional Afghan evacuees arrive in the United States, irrespective of immigration status. The resolution bridges the gap in funding between what is available to Special Immigrant Visa-holders and what is not to Humanitarian Parolees. The extra support is critical to a successful resettlement, ensuring access to financial security, integration services, and positive health outcomes. As the debate continues on year-long federal appropriations for Fiscal Year 2022, it is important that these resources continue to be prioritized.

I also commend President Biden for following through on his pledge to increase the Fiscal Year 2022 refugee resettlement cap to 125,000 people. The unprecedented cuts by the previous administration to the number of refugees eligible for resettlement in the United States not only betrayed our nation's values but ignored the urgent circumstances contributing to the dramatic increases in refugees and displaced persons around the world. As you rebuild the infrastructure needed to welcome Afghan evacuees as well as refugees from around the world, I encourage you to take every step possible to ensure the full cap authority is utilized.

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As the resettlement effort continues, I urge you to consider further steps to improve the resettlement process – both for individuals and families who departed Afghanistan prior to the withdrawal of U.S. forces, and those imperiled by the Taliban. In the short term, I ask that you:

- (a) expedite the processing of Special Immigrant Visa and Humanitarian parolee applications, as was done for asylum seekers;
- (b) waive filing fees wherever possible;
- (c) expand opportunities for filing Special Immigrant Visas and P1, P2, and P3 refugee applications;
- (d) champion legislation that streamlines the path to permanency and citizenship for new arrivals;
- (e) improve information resources and tools for Afghans already in the United States whose eligible family members require assistance; and
- (f) commit to collaborating with state officials and refugee coordinators before reaching final policy decisions.

By lessening the administrative burdens for the arriving Afghans, they will be able to more readily focus on rebuilding their livelihoods, finding stable housing, and locating services. In addition, by proactively coordinating with states, our local experts will be able to provide real-time consultation on the status of available and anticipated resources.

In the long term, I hope you continue to seek opportunities to support the people of Afghanistan, consistent with U.S. policy regarding that country, by funding the NGOs that continue their important work on the ground.

Again, I extend my gratitude for the tireless efforts of you and your team to date. Together, we can welcome thousands of families while rebuilding the refugee resettlement infrastructure.

Very truly yours,



Jay Inslee  
Governor

CC: President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
Secretary Antony Blinken, Department of State  
Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, Department of Homeland Security  
Washington Congressional Delegation